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Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Raymond **Landveld** (Suriname)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 19 (see A/66/440, para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 34th and 37th meetings, on 10 November and 1 December 2011. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/66/SR.34 and 37).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/66/L.44 and A/C.2/66/L.60

2. At the 34th meeting, on 10 November, the representative of Argentina, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/66/L.44), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "*Recalling* its resolutions 58/211 of 23 December 2003, 61/202 of 20 December 2006, 62/193 of 19 December 2007, 63/218 of 19 December 2008, 64/202 of 21 December 2009 and 65/160 of 20 December 2010 as well

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 11 parts, under the symbol A/66/440 and Add.1-10.

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as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

"*Concerned* about the negative economic impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought, and in this regard welcoming the organization in 2012 of the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference, on the theme 'Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas',

"*Concerned also* about the increasing frequency and severity of dust storms and sandstorms affecting arid and semi-arid regions and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

"*Noting* the need for enhanced cooperation among the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, at all levels, while respecting their individual mandates,

"*Underlining* the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, and in this regard inviting all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in supporting an effective response to those challenges,

"*Expressing its deep appreciation* to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Changwon City, Gyeongnam Province, from 10 to 21 October 2011,

"*Expressing its appreciation* to the Executive Secretary of the Convention for his efforts in ensuring the success of the high-level meeting of the sixty-sixth session of General Assembly on the theme 'Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication', and taking note of the summary of the deliberations by the President of the General Assembly,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 65/160 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

"2. *Notes* the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the theme 'Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication', which emphasized that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification serves as a tool to, inter alia, achieve food security, poverty eradication and sustainable development and promote sustainable land use in drylands;

"3. *Expresses concern and solidarity* over the situation in the horn of Africa region, which has been hit by the worst drought in sixty years leading to starvation and loss of crops and livestock, clearly reflecting the severity of the problems of drought and desertification and the imperative for action;

"4. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the tenth session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention, and emphasizes the need to implement the decisions adopted at that Conference;

"5. *Also welcomes* the efforts by the parties to the Convention to find lasting solutions to the institutional and managerial challenges relating to the Global Mechanism of the Convention, as identified in various external assessments, including the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, which have impeded delivery of better services to the parties, through the decision of the Conference of the Parties on governance and institutional arrangements for the Global Mechanism;

"6. *Recommends* the strengthening of the advisory role of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology, through their recommendations, in order to monitor effectively the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

"7. *Stresses* the continuing need to strengthen the scientific basis of the Convention, and in this regard notes the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session to establish an ad hoc working group to discuss specific options for the provision of scientific advice;

"8. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility, in further enhancing resource allocation during future replenishments, to consider increasing allocations to the focal area of land degradation;

"9. *Stresses* that desertification, land degradation and drought continue to pose challenges to sustainable development, including food security in developing countries, particularly in Africa, and in this regard emphasizes the need for financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building;

"10. *Underlines* the relevance of the core issues of the Convention to the objectives and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and in this regard emphasizes the need to raise the profile of desertification, land degradation and drought in accordance with the mandate of the Convention among the priority issues to be addressed by the Conference on Sustainable Development during its preparatory process and in its outcomes;

"11. *Reaffirms* the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the secretariat of the Convention and the United Nations Secretariat for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by both the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties no later than 31 December 2017, as decided by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session;

"12. *Decides* to include in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2012-2013 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the biennium, and requests the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies in his proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013;

"13. *Also decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-seventh session, under the item entitled 'Sustainable development', the sub-item entitled 'Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa';

"14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At its 37th meeting, on 1 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/66/L.60) submitted by the Rapporteur on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.44.

4. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.60.

5. Also at the 37th meeting, the Rapporteur orally revised the draft resolution by replacing "2017" by "2016" in operative paragraph 12 (see A/C.2/66/SR.37).

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.60, as orally revised (see para. 8).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.60, draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.44 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 58/211 of 23 December 2003, 61/202 of 20 December 2006, 62/193 of 19 December 2007, 63/218 of 19 December 2008, 64/202 of 21 December 2009 and 65/160 of 20 December 2010, as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1]

Concerned by the negative economic impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought, and in this regard welcoming the organization of the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference, on the theme "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas", to be held by March 2013 at the latest,

Concerned also by the increasing frequency and severity of dust storms and sandstorms affecting arid and semi-arid regions and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

Noting the need for enhanced cooperation among the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[2] and the Convention on Biological Diversity,[3] while respecting their individual mandates,

Underlining the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, and in this regard inviting all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in supporting an effective response to those challenges,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Changwon City from 10 to 21 October 2011,

Taking note of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication", which emphasized that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification serves as a tool for achieving, inter alia, food security, poverty eradication and sustainable development, for promoting sustainable land use in drylands, and for enhancing the scientific process so that

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[3] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

desertification, land degradation and drought issues are better understood, and acknowledging the comprehensive work carried out by the focal point and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in organizing that high-level meeting,

Acknowledging the importance of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 65/160 and on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;[4]

2. *Expresses deep concern* about the critical situation in the Horn of Africa region, which is experiencing one of the worst droughts in history, and underlines that this situation highlights the need for the effective implementation of the Convention and its ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018), through short-, medium- and long-term measures;

3. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and emphasizes the need to implement the decisions adopted at that session;

4. *Also welcomes* the effort by the Conference of the Parties to find lasting solutions with respect to the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism, as a follow-up to various external assessments undertaken, including the 2009 report of the Joint Inspection Unit,[5] with a view to better servicing the Conference of the Parties;

5. *Recommends* the strengthening of the advisory role of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology, through their recommendations, in order to monitor effectively the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

6. *Notes* the continuing need for strengthening the scientific basis of the Convention and the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its tenth session[6] to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into consideration regional balance, to further discuss options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification/land degradation and drought issues, taking into account the regional approach of the Convention;

7. *Also notes* the efforts under way for the development and implementation of scientifically based and sound methods for monitoring and assessing desertification;

8. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility, in further enhancing resource allocation during future replenishments, to consider increasing allocations to the land degradation focal area, depending on the availability of resources;

9. *Notes* the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its

[4] See A/66/291, sect. II.

[5] See A/64/379.

[6] See ICCD/COP(10)/_/Add.1, decision _/COP.10.

subsidiary bodies in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the involvement of these stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention;

10. *Reaffirms its resolve* to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention, with a view to addressing causes of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation, through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and capacity-building;

11. *Notes* the ongoing preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012;

12. *Reaffirms* the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by both the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention no later than 31 December 2016, as decided by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session;[7]

13. *Decides* to include in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2012-2013 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the biennium and requests the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies when submitting the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013;

14. *Also decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-seventh session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa";

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

[7] Ibid., decision /COP.10.